

REMARKS

Claims 1-6 are pending in the application. By this amendment, claims 1 and 4 are amended.

The Examiner notes that claims 1-6 include the use of the word "for", which indicates intended use. Applicants have removed several instances of the use of this term and amended the claims in response to the Examiner's observation. Similarly, in claims 4-6, the Examiner states that "bumper assembly" is recited as a work object and claim 4 has been amended to recite a bumper cover and an access door.

Claims 4 and 6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by *Smith et al* (6,260,874). The Examiner states that *Smith* discloses an access door concealing a tubular hitch receiver mounted within a bumper assembly of an automotive vehicle, wherein the bumper assembly has a bumper cover with an aperture for accessing not only an exterior portion but also an interior portion of the hitch receiver. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection and request that claims 4 and 6 be reconsidered in view their amendment and these remarks and passed to issue. Applicants respectfully submit that *Smith* discloses nothing regarding a bumper cover. Rather, *Smith* does disclose a hitch cover, but as set forth in Applicants' specification, claims and drawings, it is clear that a bumper cover comprises a member which conceals the entirety of the bumper. In other words, the bumper cover is that part of the vehicle which covers the entirety of the bumper and which is observable to a casual observer walking around the vehicle. This definition of "bumper cover" is consistent with contemporary automotive engineering parlance. Applicants' bumper cover is a not a piece plugged into a receiver hitch in the lexicography of the present application. As a result, because *Smith* discloses nothing regarding the defined bumper cover, claims 4 and 6 are allowable over *Smith* and should be passed to issue. Such action is earnestly solicited.

Claims 1-2 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Smith* in view of *Morrison* (6,139,044). The Examiner states that *Smith* discloses a bumper assembly having a bumper cover 50, and an aperture for accessing not only an interior portion but also an exterior portion of hitch receiver 42. The Examiner agrees that *Smith* fails to disclose providing an access door engaged to the receiver, but states that *Morrison* discloses a method for providing an access door for concealing a hitch receiver including providing a door having an outer decorated surface and an inner surface, with the access door having an attaching bracket mounted to the inner surface. The Examiner states that it would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to apply the method disclosed by *Morrison* to the bumper assembly disclosed by *Smith* in order to cover up and decorate the hitch receiver when not in use.


Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection and request that claims 1 and 2 be reconsidered in view of these remarks and in view of the amendment of claim 1, and passed to issue.

Smith '044 discloses an integrated bumper and hitch assembly in which there is a hitch protruding below the bumper. The hitch is covered by hitch cover 50. As clearly seen from Figure 2 of the '044 patent, *Smith*'s hitch cover 50 is not a bumper cover nor is it the bumper. In other words, *Smith* '044 does not have a bumper cover with an aperture for accessing a hitch receiver. As a result, claims 1 and 2 are not properly rejected over the combination of *Smith* and *Morrison*, whether taken singly, or in combination with each other, and claims 1 and 2 should be passed to issue. Such action is earnestly solicited.

Claims 3 and 5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Smith et al* '874 in view of *Randall* (3,596,926). However, claim 3 depends from claim 1, and claim 5 depends from claim 4, which are allowable over *Smith* and certainly allowable over the combination of *Smith* and *Randall*, given that *Randall* teaches nothing more than a cover placed over a hitch. As a result, each of claims 3 and 5 are allowable and should be passed to issue. Such action is earnestly solicited.

Please charge any fees required in the filing of this amendment to Deposit Account 06-1510.

Respectfully submitted,


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Date: 7/20/05

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